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VIPs get fed resort digs dirt cheap

By JOSEPH VOLZ

Washington (News Bureau)—There is a select group of citizens who have found a way to take low-cost vacations at some of the nation's most scenic resorts—even in these days of double-digit inflation.

A host of Carter administration officials, members of Congress and top-level bureaucrats will be spending the summer months at special VIP lodges, run by the National Park Service at places like Cape Hatteras, on North Carolina's wild and beautiful outer banks, and Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming.

For example, CIA Director Stansfield Turner and his family will be spending a week at Brinkerhoff House in the Grand Tetons at discount rates, courtesy of the

taxpayers. The three-bedroom log cabin is situated on Jackson Lake, with a picture-window view of the Tetons, and it includes all the comforts of home—there's even a king-sized bed. The cost? A total of \$39.50 a day for a double; \$56 for the whole cabin.

Turner already has signed up with the Park Service's Capitol Hill lobbyist, Ira Whitlock, who keeps a notebook in his office to make arrangements for the dignitaries. (The CIA chief can only have a week, however, because Sen. Alan Simpson has booked a vacation at Brinkerhoff House, too. Simpson is one of Wyoming's senators, so the park is really convenient.)

For their edification

National Park Service officials insist that the VIP lodges were established to give legislators a first-hand look at how the parks system works. But top brass in the Interior Department—which includes the Park Service— who presumably already know how the system works are among those who enjoy the cut-rate facilities.

David Hales, deputy assistant interior secretary, is spending four days at scenic Camp Hoover, near the Skyline Drive in Virginia's Shenandoah National Park. The camp is named for President Herbert Hoover, who bought 164 acres of land with his personal funds shortly after entering office in 1929. An avid fisherman, Hoover wanted a presidential hideaway within 100 miles of Washington with a good trout stream, a view of the mountains and no mosquitoes. Camp Hoover meets all the qualifications.

Camp Hoover has another advantage—its 1929 prices. A two-bedroom cabin there, for example, rents for \$9 a day. Clearly, this sits well with members of Congress. Rep. John Erlenborn (R-Ill.) is booked for a weekend next month just after Sen. J. Bennett Johnston (D-La.). Johnson is a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, which recommends how much the National Park Service receives to operate, among other things, the VIP lodges.

As for Camp Hoover, ordinary taxpayers are allowed to look around the premises—no overnight visits permitted—once a year on Hoover's birthday. But if non-VIP visitors want to stay in the Shenandoah National Park overnight, the nearest public lodge is at Big Meadows and it charges between \$20 and \$45 a day for a double.

When it gets a little too chilly at Camp Hoover, there always is the Fort Jefferson National Monument 42 miles west of Key West, Fla. This one is really remote. It is accessible only by boat or air. The Park Service operates a boat that makes the voyage from Key West in 3½ hours. VIPs arriving at the island apartment, which accommodates four, are charged \$6 per day.

Among those who booked into the Fort Jefferson apartment last year were Rep. David Obey (D-Wis.) and Gary Fontana, a White House staffer.